

LIBERAL CHARITY STATED, AND RECOMMENDED ON
THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL.

A S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND
FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;

AT THEIR ANNIVERSARY MEETING
IN THE HIGH CHURCH OF EDINBURGH,

On Friday June 5. 1789.

BY THE REVEREND ROBERT BALFOUR,

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF GLASGOW.

To which is added

AN APPENDIX,

Containing an Abstract of the

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY

Since June 1787.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
DAVID EARL OF LEVEN AND MELVILL,

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY
FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

THE
FOLLOWING SERMON

IS
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY
HIS LORDSHIP'S
MOST OBEDIENT, AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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EDINBURGH, JUNE 5. 1789.

At a General Meeting of the Society in Scotland for
Propagating Christian Knowledge,

*THE thanks of the Society were given from
the Chair to the Rev. Mr. Balfour, for his
excellent Sermon this day preached before them;
and he was requested to give his manuscript
of the same, to be printed for the benefit of the
Society.*

JO. KEMP, SEC.

A
S E R M O N.

2 COR. ix. 6. — LAST CLAUSE.

HE WHICH SOWETH BOUNTIFULLY SHALL REAP
BOUNTIFULLY.

THE scriptures abound in a great variety of the most beautiful images, and figurative allusions. These are sometimes employed as the only fit conveyance of spiritual truths to our minds; sometimes as apt and affecting illustrations of known truths; and sometimes to press them more forcibly upon our attention, and allure us into a more cheerful compliance with their design. In this and the preceding chapter the apostle urges the Corinthians to be charitable to the poor saints. By the most insinuating address he takes possession of every avenue to their hearts, and puts them under the pleasing necessity of yielding to his generous design. However, lest, covetousness should exert a secret counteracting

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influence, and suggest that the required liberality would subject them to a great and unproductive expence, he fully obviates the objection, without formally stating it, for he reprobates the gift bestowed with reluctance, and promises ample returns to the cheerful giver. The instruction thus given, needed not the assistance of metaphor, to render it intelligible: But it is admirably illustrated and enforced by the choice of a similitude, perfectly expressive of his intention. "He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully." As well might the husbandman look upon the seed unsparingly scattered in his field, to be for ever lost; as the truly bountiful man suppose, that the riches, which, with a liberal hand he hath expended upon the poor, are thrown away. The expectations and returns in the one case, are not more reasonable and certain, than in the other. The general sentiment then is, that liberal charity shall receive a rich and full reward. I leave the metaphor to illustrate this sentiment. Such a subject cannot be unsuitable, when met to give our countenance and support to a charitable institution, great in its designs, and extensive in its operation. We pay a just, respectful, and grateful tribute to the memory of its first

founders, and to the present members of the very respectable society, whose unceasing exertions and influence have been so honourably and successfully employed in following out the original scheme, when we assemble at their desire, to worship that God, who alone can crown their labours of love, and our co-operating charity with a rich and effectual blessing. To direct and animate our prosecution of this important object, I shall endeavour, through divine grace, *First*, To delineate the character represented in the text; and *Secondly*, To illustrate the meaning and design of the promise annexed.

Let us begin with calling your attention to the character here represented, “He that soweth
“bountifully,” in other words, the man of liberal charity.

And I observe, *First*, That this is a character formed and perfected under the influence of supreme regard to God and the Redeemer. No character can acquire any established distinction by a single action, or a few occasional exertions. These must be uniformly called forth by some fixed corresponding prin-

ciple, otherwise the features will daily change, and a variable character appear. Indeed, our decisions upon character can seldom be true, when founded on transient evidence. But higher evidence we cannot expect, unless men act upon principle, and no principle can be so powerful and extensive in its influence as the love of God and the Redeemer. Wherever this prevails, the mind aspires to every degree of moral excellence, and there is perhaps no branch of that excellence, in which its operation is more certain, and apparent, than that of charity. Hence we read, "That love is of God, and every one that loveth is
 "born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth
 "not, knoweth not God, for God is love.. He
 "that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and
 "God in him. But whoso hath this world's
 "goods, and seeth his brother have need, and
 "shutteth up his bowels of compassion from
 "him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Wherefore adds the apostle, addressing himself to professing Christians, "My little children, let
 "us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in
 "deed." Thus it appears, that beneficent love to men is at once a natural consequence and

proof of knowing the love of God, and loving him.

Men, destitute of this principle, and who do not pretend to act under its influence, may exhibit remarkable instances of charity. These, it is not my business at present, to trace to their various sources, far less, to reprobate the beneficial actions to which they give rise. In as far as they are useful to society, they merit public praise. I cheerfully offer my tribute of grateful acknowledgment, while I regret their want of that noblest and most operative principle, which would render them completely amiable and praise-worthy. If, while strangers to its influence, they do so much good, what would they not do, how much more extensively useful would they not be, were love to God, and his Son, the ruling passion in their minds? Without derogating from their liberality, permit me to say, that in their state of alienation from the life and love of God, we can have little dependence on their continuing or abounding in that sort of goodness. Nay, their circumstances, and views, in this condition, rather tend to blunt their sensibilities, to put restraints upon their generous exertions, and to give them a confined, partial,

or capricious direction. Ignorant of, or inattentive to the divine character, they can have no perfect standard of excellence. Self, or the creature in some form or other, is substituted in the place of the Creator and Redeemer of mankind. With such inferior objects in their eye, virtuous emulation can rise to no high pitch. They are actuated merely by selfish and worldly motives, and the best impressions which these can make on their minds must be temporary and fluctuating; their operation is exceedingly limited, or easily interrupted. Nay, when there exist no higher principles of human conduct, must we not rather suspect that, instead of beneficence, very different and opposite effects will more frequently follow, even malevolent affections and injurious practices. The scriptures therefore, in describing the character of apostate men, represent them, as not only enemies to God in their minds, and by wicked works, but as naturally "living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." Whatever more favourable construction we may attempt to put upon these declarations of scripture, I am confident that it will be admitted by all, that they, whose character is formed and maintained under the influence of supreme love

to God, and the Saviour, must excel in all goodness, and particularly in the most liberal charity. Must not the lover, the admirer of the Divine character, wish above all things to imitate it in every imitable perfection? If the enmity of the carnal mind discover itself in refusing subjection to the law of God, when that enmity is slain, and friendship restored, must not the will of God become the will of the man? Can he hear the divine command without echoing back, that to love God “with all the heart, and with all the
 “understanding, and with all the soul, and with
 “all the strength, and to love his neighbour as
 “himself, is more than all burnt-offerings.” If
 “his eyes are turned away from beholding vanity,” to the contemplation of divine excellence, greatness, and grace, must not his soul expand with the enlarged prospect before him, and in a manner partake of the divine nature? If he is made wise, spiritually to understand, and faithfully to trace the ways of providence; if he thus perceives, that “God is good to all, and
 “that his tender mercies are over all his other
 “works,—that he makes his sun to shine and his
 “rain to descend on the just, and the unjust,—
 “that his eyes go to and fro to show himself

“mighty, in behalf of those whose hearts are
 “perfect towards him;” must not love to so
 bountiful a Benefactor, effectually prompt him
 “to do good to all, especially to those of the
 “household of faith, yea to be merciful as his
 “father in heaven is merciful?” When his di-
 vinely illuminated mind takes all these views of
 God, as arising from, and connected with the
 grand scheme of man’s salvation, how is his heart
 enlarged and moved with generous sentiments?
 Can he think of “God so loving the world, as
 “to give his only begotten Son,” and with-hold
 any possible return of affection and duty? Can
 he contemplate, and experience “the grace of
 “our Lord Jesus, in becoming poor to make ma-
 “ny rich,” without feeling and exerting at once
 all the warmth of gratitude and of a similar be-
 nevolence? Having the Divine character strong-
 ly represented to his mind by the spirit of truth,
 “the desire of his soul is henceforth towards
 “him, and the remembrance of his name:” he
 feels and confesses indeed that his goodness can-
 not extend to an object infinitely glorious, but,
 in the highest admiration and love, of this su-
 preme, divine perfection and grace, he is ambi-
 tious to imitate these in the exercise of all good-

ness “ to the saints, as the excellent ones of the “ earth,” yea, and to all his fellow-men: His own enemies, and the irreligious and profane are not excluded from his benevolent regards.

IN the *second* place, the man of liberal charity is one who gives cheerfully according to his ability. The sacred oracles teach us that charity is not so much to be measured by what we give, as by the proportion which it bears to our circumstances in life, and the manner in which we bestow it. We find a most instructive piece of history to this purpose in Mark xii. 41. where our Lord takes notice of the contributions made to the public treasury. None are censured for neglect, nay, it is granted that “ the rich gave much.” But notwithstanding this show of liberality, a poor widow who only gave in two mites, receives his distinguished approbation. Her offering was in itself insignificant.—But what saith the unerring Judge? ver. 43. 44. “ He called unto him his disciples, and “ saith unto them, verily I say unto you, that “ this poor widow hath cast more in than all “ they which have cast into the treasury. For “ all they did cast in of their abundance, but she

“ of her want did cast in all that she had, even
 “ all her living.”—A judgment founded not on
 the outward appearance of things, but on the re-
 lations which these several offerings bore to the real
 circumstances of the donors, and the motives from
 which they acted. A similar decision is given,
 2 Cor. viii. 12. where the apostle declares, that,
 “ if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted
 “ according to that a man hath, and not accord-
 “ ing to that he hath not.” This too is the plain
 import of the direction in his first epistle to the
 Corinthians, chap. xvi. 1. 2. “ Now concerning
 “ the collection for the saints, as I have given
 “ order to the churches of Galatia, even so do
 “ ye; upon the first day of the week, let every
 “ one of you lay by him in store, as *God has*
 “ *prospered him.*” By the exhortation imme-
 diately following our text, the apostle gives this
 very account of liberal charity. “ Every man
 “ according as he purposeth in his heart, so let
 “ him give, not *grudgingly, or of necessity*, for
 “ *God loveth a cheerful giver.*” Thus we are
 taught to estimate charity by a comparative view
 of it with our worldly substance and our dispo-
 sitions. Let not persons in affluence value them-
 selves as truly liberal, because upon some occa-

sions they have contributed largely to the support of their indigent brethren, but let them inquire whether their charity corresponds to their abundance, and whether even what they give is extorted, or freely and most cheerfully parted with. Let not these in inferior stations and circumstances think themselves excused from this duty, as being, in their own opinion, incapable of affording any useful or decent assistance to the destitute and afflicted. But let them remember the widow's mite, as not only accepted, but esteemed by the best judge of the worth of actions, a richer offering than the vast sums which the rich gave out of their abundance. He who blessed to the widow of Zarephath her handful of meal and cruse of oil with permanent virtue to nourish her and her son, can, in ways unknown to us, and to an extent of usefulness inconceivable by us, enrich with his blessing the smallest offerings. I mean not by this to state an invidious comparison between the rich and the poor, to reduce the value of what is done by the former, and magnify the services of the latter ; but to show that in either situation, the character I am describing may be, and is in fact most truly and honourably maintained, when it bears a just proportion to

our worldly stock and prosperity, and when we “freely give as having freely received.” I have joined the ability and inclination to do good, because both must be seriously attended to in the proper exercise of charity, to distinguish it on the one hand from the thoughtless profusion of the prodigal, and, on the other hand, from the niggardly pittance of the miser. The former, by ignorance of, or inattention to his proper funds, may inconsiderately throw away what is not his own; he may thus feed the poor, and feed his own vanity, but what is given at the expence of others, is not charity; it is gross injustice. This folly and iniquity, however, can never justify the penurious, covetous, mean-spirited wretch, who cannot admit a thought or care beyond himself and his coffer. Wrapt up in unceasing attention to his useless wealth, he never believes himself able, because he never feels himself willing to relieve the necessities of others. How different, how superior to both these characters, is the man who knows what he can give, and has a heart to bestow?—Who, in the conscious possession of riches, values them only as the means of usefulness—receives and employs them as a sacred trust from the great Lord and Pro-

prietor of all, and who, as his grateful and faithful steward, honours him with his substance. This is a man of an excellent, open, liberal spirit. “ He looks not to his own things, but to “ the things of others. He is not high-minded, “ but condescends to them of low estate. He “ trusts not in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to “ enjoy,” and he therefore lays them out for his glory, and the good of his fellow-creatures. “ He is rich in good works, ready to distribute, “ willing to communicate.” This cheerful liberality is not the effect of a great effort, produced by the violence of public demand, or the resistless cry of misery forcing attention, but it is the result of the prevailing direction of his mind. Like that God who is the object of his supreme affection, he waits to be gracious, and delights in showing mercy; “ he deviseth liberal “ things; he giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.” Like the benevolent and the beneficent Saviour, he is ready to seize every opportunity of showing kindness, and goes about doing good. He may not have silver or gold, to put into the hands of the poor and helpless, but he does not therefore shut up his bowels of compassion from them.

Whatever is in his power to give, he gives without reluctance. If he cannot relieve them, he feels for them and weeps with them. A mind so willing never fails to find opportunities of doing good, and when they occur, he eagerly embraces them. The objections and apologies which satisfy others, are, in his mind, quickly repelled, and yield at once to the more persuasive power of sympathy and love.

(IN the *third* place, true liberal charity is wisely divided amongst many, and proportioned to the objects upon which it acts. It is not, it cannot be confined to near relations, intimate friends, or particular favourites. These it will never neglect; nay, to these its first attentions are naturally directed. But whatever may be its partialities to those immediately connected with us, or who love and resemble us, it cannot remain under these restrictions. The principle which gave it birth, extends its influence in every possible direction. The objects which solicit the friendly aid of charity, are many and various. *Here* we find the afflicted body,—*there* the grieved mind. Here a mourning desolate widow—there destitute orphans.—Per-

haps both together sitting in silent dejection, or agitated with all the violence of grief. At one time we hear the plaintive voice of the friendless solitary mourner—at another, the united cries of a numerous starving family. Turn to the one hand, and feeble tottering old age requests support—turn to the other hand, and the deserted infant, or neglected youth, requires a kind interposition. These, and many similar cases of urgent necessity, claim the attention and care of the compassionate and generous. On such occasions, how does the man of liberal charity feel and act? Is theatrical representation necessary to rouse his sensibilities? Must he learn from the fictitious tale of misery to compassionate *real* distress? Must his heart be taught by the tongue of the pathetic orator to move with sentiments of generous sympathy? No! well-attested facts are sufficient to call them forth to the most seasonable and effectual exertions; or he repairs to the house of the mourners, and seeing, with his own eyes, and hearing, with his own ears, he mingles his tears with theirs—his heart overflows with the tenderest emotions, and his hand readily administers according to his abilities. Amidst such various scenes of sorrow, that which

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overwhelms him most is, that he cannot extend his help to all. This, however, checks not the ardour of his charity, but prompts his wisdom and prudence to contrive how he may most usefully divide his labours of love. He cannot think of devoting them entirely to one, or a very few, because thus *they* might receive too much, and others too little. But while he cannot be confined within a very small circle, both prudence and charity forbid his taking too wide a range, lest he should defeat his own benevolent purposes; by extending thus too far, his means would prove unequal to the end. Much may be given away, and yet lose its effect, by being divided into so many small parts that almost none receive material benefit. He therefore considers who are the most needy, the most worthy, and what are their different resources, and he adapts his charity to their state and character. He clothes the naked, or feeds the hungry, or comforts the disconsolate, or educates the friendless youth, or administers counsel to the ignorant, the perplexed, and the unexperienced. Full of desire to answer all demands, when his own funds are insufficient, he thinks it not mean nor troublesome to ask assistance, and plead the

cause of the destitute. He does not stop to inquire, who is my neighbour? By the ties of humanity he feels his heart knit to the whole human race. While he looks up with devotion and gratitude to their common parent, he looks around him with kind and tender attachment, and says, "Are we not all his offspring?"—These amiable and humane dispositions rise to a still more exalted benevolence, under the experienced influence of the divine Saviour's grace and benignity. In one affectionate embrace the Christian clasps the whole world. Even to enemies and strangers he wishes to stretch his relieving beneficent hand. Though no returns in kind should be made, nay, though acts of generosity or friendship should meet with insensibility and ingratitude, the ardour of his liberal charity cannot be damped, or diverted from the honourable pursuits of goodness and mercy.

Lastly, THAT may well be called liberal charity, which is designed to promote the greatest possible good. If it be charity to grant a temporary relief to individuals, a permanent provision made or supported upon principles of public utility, and put under proper manage-

ment, must be the expression of a richer liberality. If the occasional aids of sympathy affording a seasonable service to men racked with pain, or pining under infirmity and want, be charity, how is the charity increased, when the means of preserving and promoting health are plentifully furnished? If, besides comforting and helping afflicted old age, we also take the helpless young under our care, and form them to habits of sobriety and industry; if we do every thing in our power to render them virtuous, happy, and valuable members of society, —still more if we extend our concern for their welfare to their spiritual and eternal interests, such benevolent designs and pursuits must be prompted and animated by the liberal mind that deviseth liberal things. Every instance of effectual relief to the afflicted, the needy, or the oppressed, is in itself an act of generosity; but the greater the evil and danger from which we are delivered, and the greater the safety and good to which we are raised, the more highly we admire the means of our distinguished escape and advantage. When we consider sin in its own nature, and certain eternal consequences, the greatest possible evil is then before our eyes. But for

it, no other evil could have existed : By it the name of God hath been dishonoured, human nature degraded, the world subjected to every calamity, and all mankind to eternal punishment. Here is the dreadful source of all human woe, and this moral evil is universal. “ All have “ sinned, and come short of the glory of God ;” and we know that “ the wages of sin is death,” eternal death. “ What then shall we do to be “ saved,” and to save our brethren ? Does the heart heave, and the tear drop, in the presence of the afflicted and the dying ? What rivers of tears should run down our eyes, when we see the wicked forget God, forsake his laws, and destroy themselves ? To convert a sinner, is to save a soul from death. “ What shall it profit a “ man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose “ his own soul ? Or what can a man give in exchange for the soul ?” Is there then no charity in the world to exert itself in this most important sphere ? Or is the redemption of the soul so precious, that it must cease for ever, because no man, however opulent and well disposed, can offer a sufficient ransom for himself, or for his brother ? How must we extol the charity which brings relief in a crisis so awful and important ?

We are this day happy witnesses that it hath appeared, and still exists upon earth. It hath been seen in the form of man, and clothed with all the energies of God. “ God is love, and God “ was manifested in the flesh.”—See yonder heavens open, and the Son of the highest descending—yea, flying on the wings of unequalled love, to save a guilty perishing world.—Behold, admire, and imitate, “ He is the “ brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” “ Lo ! I come,” said he, “ rejoicing in the habitable parts of the “ earth, and my delights were with the sons of “ men.” Were ever the ears of sinful mortals saluted with so joyful a sound ? “ The voice “ of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles “ of the righteous ; for the Lord is their strength “ and song, he also is become their salvation.” “ Let every heart now say, amen, hosannah to “ the Son of David, hosannah in the highest, “ blessed is he that cometh in the name of the “ Lord to save.” “ Righteousness having thus “ looked down from heaven, mercy and truth “ meet together on earth.” “ Now abideth “ faith, hope, and charity ; and the greatest of “ these is charity :”—And the greatest charity is

to love as Christ has loved. This is at once the origin and pattern of Christian benevolence. Without it, humanity would have had but a limited sphere, and a feeble operation. Without it, mutual regard of man to man would have been altogether insufficient for the deliverance of a single soul : Now we are placed in a situation in which we may be the honoured instruments of removing the greatest evil from the world, and of promoting the best, even the eternal interests of mankind. The man, whose mind is animated with truly Christian benevolence, gladly avails himself of that advantageous situation. While he is not indifferent to *any* of the interests of his fellow-creatures, but cheerfully lends his friendly charitable aid to all who need it, and for every useful purpose, yet his more ardent and generous ambition is to do the greatest good to precious immortal souls. He is ready to sacrifice every worldly pleasure, honour, and advantage to the propagation of the gospel. Seeking the profit of many that they may be saved, he eagerly seizes every opportunity of sending to others the word of salvation. This he considers as the best and most precious seed which can be sown in the field of the world. He thinks

himself happy if he can furnish the scriptures, and the means of religious instruction and eternal salvation, to those who are ready to perish for lack of knowledge. To be the instrument of bringing glory to God, and supreme happiness to men, chiefly commands his attention, and excites and regulates every benevolent scheme and exertion. Such, my brethren, is the amiable and great and useful character represented in our text, under the figure of *sowing bountifully*.

LET us now attend, as was proposed, *in the second place*, to the richness of his reward, expressed in the promise added, that he shall reap also bountifully. Need I here caution you against considering what shall be said on this part of the subject, as holding out any deserved recompence to personal merit. No such connexion of things could be intended by the apostle. Every claim of this kind is expressly condemned by the whole tenor of his doctrine and example. At the same time, like one skilful in the word of righteousness, and who knew the grace of God in truth, he is careful to assert its practical influence, and the inviolable connexion betwixt the privileges and hopes of Christians, and a corresponding

character. The apostle, therefore, must not be understood as proposing the remuneration of meritorious exertions, but an encouraging animating motive to duty. The *reward is not of debt, but of grace*. The grace, which promises and bestows the reward, forms, as we have already shown, the character suited to it. In that character, we contemplate not the dignity of merit, but the necessary evidence of an interest in the love of God, and all its great and eternal designs. This will be still more apparent from the illustration of this second head of discourse.

IN the *first* place, the truth of this great and gracious promise will be felt in inward enjoyment and spiritual improvement. The good man, says Solomon, shall be satisfied from himself. This is not the pride of self-flattery, but the testimony of a good conscience. The pleasures of a benevolent mind, are of a peculiarly refined and exalted nature. Strangers to purity of principle and affection, cannot intermeddle with this joy. In this respect, virtue is its own reward. Self-satisfaction, without having the moral sense exercised, to discern between good and evil, is an unenviable and despicable enjoy-

ment. If we feel and think with any degree of justness concerning right and wrong, every sinful pursuit and pleasure must be mixed with disapprobation and painful apprehension. On the contrary, the due exercise of our moral powers supposes a regularity and subordination in all the parts of our spiritual constitution, which, in the nature of things, is inseparable from real enjoyment. In this, indeed, all proper mental enjoyment consists ; because thus all the affections of the soul meet with, and act upon their proper objects. In the exercise of charity, for instance, how can an unpleasing sentiment arise in the mind? Every disposition excited and exerted is marked with amiableness, gentleness, and kindness. Here, too, a high degree of happiness is derived from the good which we are instrumental in communicating to others. What they feel in receiving our assistance, we feel in giving it. The sensibility which was so tenderly touched by their miseries, is not less susceptible of their joy, when relieved and comforted, and we naturally participate in the satisfaction which we have been enabled to impart. But, besides this native operation, and effect of benevolent sentiments and exertions, when these are reviewed

and recognized as the fruits of the spirit, we enter into a still higher, because more spiritual and divine enjoyment. “ The peace of God, “ passing all understanding, *then* keeps the heart “ and mind through Jesus Christ.” The Christian, “ examining himself, and proving his own “ works, rejoices in himself, and not in another.” When he tries his experience and conduct by the scriptural marks of genuine Christianity, and finds that his charity is not the consequence merely of good nature, or facility of temper ; that it is not a sudden emotion produced by the incidental spur of the occasion, but a fixed and gracious principle implanted and cherished by the Holy Spirit, such evidence of the power of the gospel, and of supernatural grace, convinces him of his interest in the favour of God. Having this confidence towards God, he reaps bountifully indeed, being strengthened in his assurance of the approbation and love of his heavenly Father. “ He knows that he has “ passed from death unto life, because he loves “ the brethren.” “ The spirit *thus* witnesseth “ with his spirit that he is a child of God ; and “ the effect is joy, unspeakable and full of glory.” What renders the acquisition of this joy

the more valuable, is its inseparable connexion with spiritual improvement. "The joy of the Lord is our strength." Health, vigour, and exertion, have not a more certain mutual influence than spiritual enjoyment, activity, and improvement. As bodily strength is increased by exercise, and work done at first with much difficulty, becomes easy by persevering application; so repeated mental exertions, and the frequency of active duty in life, produce these good habits, which mark a consistent and improving character. These are the natural effects of all the gracious operations of a sanctified mind. "We work out our salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*." What Christian can take this connected view of these increasing consolations in divine love and growing holiness, without finding that *he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully?*

ADD to this, *in the second place*, the blessing and prayers of those who receive your help.

* All this is beautifully set forth in the short but comprehensive history of the churches in Judaea, Galatia, and Samaria; Acts ix. 31. by the Apostle's prayer for the Colossians, i. 9.—13. and by Peter, 2 Ep. i. 2.—12.

These, as they are often expressed by common mendicants, are of no value. Neither can the curse causeless fall upon your head. Yet do not slight the grateful acknowledgments of an honest mind, nor despise the efficacy of prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." If animated by pure and fervent charity, the children of God will be the first objects of your regard. You will love and serve them for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them. Your kindness to them will be amply repaid by their prayers; and *them* "their heavenly Father heareth always." Job felt and enjoyed this as a rich recompence of his generosity; chap. xxix. v. 11—14. "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me, because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Your kind attentions may have been divinely excited in answer to their supplications, and their devotions thus increased shall no less prevail in your favour.

IN the *third* place, the promise in the text holds up, as a farther inducement to liberal charity, a richly varied and extensive prospect of good to the world. Christian charity first turns its kind and compassionate eye to the poor saints. These are brethren for whom Christ died. His love to them is not diminished by the permission of their poverty and afflictions ; for these, as they are intended trials of their faith and patience, so are they of your charity to them, and your love to him. The stronger then, and more numerous testimonies of regard you show to him in his poor suffering members on earth, the greater glory redounds to him through their thanksgiving, the greater profit to your own souls by their prayers, the greater advantage to the church by their restored assistance, and the greater good to the world by their example.

But I must beg your attention to very different scenes. Your reward is great in contributing to the victories and triumphs of faith over adversity, but greater still if you consider the various efficacy of prudent liberal charity, extended to the poverty and distresses of those who are strangers to the faith, and hopes, and comforts of the gospel—their situation is truly deplorable. To struggle with

want, disappointment, and distress, proves often a hard and alarming conflict to the real Christian; and it is a glorious office to hold up their hands till they conquer, and call us to divide the spoils. But how dreadful and dangerous is the state of the poor and afflicted who are yet in their sins? They are not, however, beyond the reach of divine mercy, and ought not therefore to be excluded from our charity. Yea, we are encouraged in this exercise of it by the most inviting prospect of extensive usefulness among human beings, wretched in themselves, and pests in society. By meeting the needy with a seasonable supply, the truly bountiful man may prevent a powerful and often ruinous temptation, or check the progress of a criminal and dangerous propensity. By furnishing the means of subsistence, and proper incitements to industry, he may save from despondency, recover from feebleness and indolence, awaken to virtuous sensibility, and restore to active and useful exertion. The blessing conferred upon one may frequently extend to many. Relief to the parent may be the preservation of the family. The children religiously educated, and trained to useful employment, will contribute to the welfare of the community.

These happy objects of charity rise, in their turn, to be heads of families, and the good which they have received they convey from generation to generation.

If our charity hath not only provided the means of religious knowledge, but hath been successful in really communicating that knowledge, have we not the reasonable prospect of its transmission to a distant posterity? With the Scriptures, the rich repository of all religious truth in their hands, with the love of that truth in their hearts, with glowing admiring gratitude for this inestimable mercy to themselves, what must be their deep concern and fervent zeal for the instruction and salvation of all with whom they are connected? How must the parent travail in birth again till Christ be formed in his children; and, if the children are first partakers of this precious benefit, how must they be fired with an holy ambition to enrich their parents with this spiritual gift? One act of charity may, in this manner, be the foundation of a magnificent building of mercy: And if it exerts itself with equal benignity upon numbers, how many splendid temples may it rear, for the worship and service of God? The words of the angel to

Cornelius may then be addressed to such a pious liberal Christian. “ Thy prayers and thine
 “ alms are come up for a memorial before God.” Accepted of God, as “ workers together with
 “ him,” and his all-powerful blessing giving the increase, “ our labours shall not be in vain in
 “ the Lord.” The good seed scattered with a liberal hand over the wide field of human necessities, shall bring forth abundance of fruit. Though the beginning of good may be small, the latter end shall greatly increase. While he sows beside all waters, the prospect of advantage and usefulness grows upon him. The richness of the soil improved by the unsparing and cultivating hand of active beneficence, and rendered fruitful by the blessing of heaven, attracts even the careless eye, and invites others to similar generous exertions. Thus Christian bounty, through the thanksgiving of many, redounds to the glory of God, and the ample satisfactory reward of the liberal Christian.—But, however much the scene may now swell before his eye, in various beauty, and pleasing grandeur, the prospect is not confined to this world. The highest hope is laid up for him in heaven.—Observe, therefore,

IN the *fourth* and *last* place, that he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully in a future and eternal state. There he shall receive a full reward indeed. "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord;" and the loan shall be repaid with highest interest. "The Lord is not unrighteous to forget his work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope." By liberal charity "we are faithful in the unrighteous mammon, and consequently receive the true riches." By being ready to communicate to the necessities of others, we do not throw away our money, "but lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven." Instead of suffering any loss or diminution of fortune; we acquire immense gain, not of perishing silver, but of "durable riches and righteousness;" a precious heavenly treasure, "which moth cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal." The liberal Christian "honoureth the Lord with his substance." To such he says, "them that honour me, I will honour."—"And what, my brethren, shall be done to the man whom the Lord delighteth to honour?" Shall he have praise of men? To this he is well entitled; and from the wise and the worthy he shall receive it;

“ yea, who shall harm him, if he be a follower of
 “ that which is good ?” But believers, “ whose
 “ faith worketh by love, seek not honour one of
 “ another.” They seek for honour from God
 only, and they shall not be disappointed. Even
 though their good should be evil spoken of, they
 have reason to rejoice, for great is their reward
 in heaven. The riches of their beneficence are
 but partially known to the world ; indeed, they
 give not their alms to be seen of men : But their
 father in heaven seeth in secret, and will reward
 them openly ; and, when he rewards, it is with
 a munificence like himself. He would be a-
 shamed to be called their God, were he only to
 bestow upon them the most splendid honours,
 and the richest estates of this world. But he
 displays the true glory of his connexion with, and
 peculiar favour for them, in preparing for them
 a city which hath foundations, eternal in the
 heavens. Though now concealed by their own
 modesty, or disregarded and despised by the
 world, ungrateful and unworthy of them, “ their
 “ witness is in heaven, and their record on high.”
 “ The Lord shall bring forth their righteousness
 “ in all the glory of the light, and their judg-
 “ ment with all the brightness of the noon-day.”

Yea, this shall be done in a manner the most majestic and divine. “ The Lord shall call to “ the heavens from above, and to the earth, that “ he may judge his people : Gather my saints “ together to me ; and the heavens shall declare “ his righteousness ; for God is judge himself.” What can equal the solemn grandeur of that day, and the glory with which the saints shall then be crowned, as these are represented by our Lord himself*. Angels, good and bad, with the whole human race, assembled before the awful tribunal of the great Lawgiver and Judge of the Universe. In such an assembly, what must be the transports of joy to the saints to be called forth and distinguished by his highest approbation expressed in the most honourable terms, marked with every grand solemnity of a public and final decision, and followed with immediate effects, yea with all the inconceivable glory and blessedness of heaven and of eternity ? This honour have all the people of God. Every one of them, without exception, “ having been justified “ freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” and so “ made heirs according to the hope of eternal

* Matth. xxv. ver. 31.—41.

“ life, having also been sanctified by the truth
 “ and spirit of Christ, and thus made meet for
 “ the inheritance of the saints in light, shall, in
 “ that great day of righteous recompence, be
 “ raised up in glory, be openly acknowledged
 “ and acquitted, and made perfectly blessed in
 “ the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.”

Now, among that happy selected number, all who have sown bountifully shall hold a distinguished place, and shall reap also bountifully. Their harvest is then fully come, and brings the most ample returns. “ They shall reap in joy.” Our Lord’s description of the solemnities of the future judgment connects with all its important transactions, the most pointed distinction, and the richest reward of liberal charity, while the opposite character is as decidedly and awfully marked with complete reprobation, and eternal disgrace and punishment.

The momentous interesting scene closes with the final dismissal of the wicked, negligent, and obdurate, into eternal punishment, while the righteous, liberal, and compassionate, are received into eternal life. “ Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. They shall appear with Christ

“ in glory, and he shall be glorified in them.
 “ He shall change even their vile bodies, and
 “ fashion them like unto his glorious body.
 “ They shall be ever with him, beholding and
 “ admiring his divine and mediatorial glory ;
 “ and when they see him as he is, they shall be
 “ like him.” Completely freed from every re-
 mainder of corruption, and from all possibility
 of sin, and suffering, and temptation, they shall,
 like him, be perfectly pure and immortal. They
 shall share with him in every communicable glo-
 ry. “ They shall walk with him in white, for
 “ they are worthy. Having washed their robes,
 “ and made them white in the blood of the
 “ Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of
 “ God, and serve him day and night in his tem-
 “ ple ; and he that sitteth on the throne shall
 “ dwell among them ; they shall hunger no
 “ more, neither thirst any more ; neither
 “ shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat,
 “ for the Lamb which is in the midst of the
 “ throne shall feed them, and shall lead them
 “ unto living fountains of water, and God shall
 “ wipe away all tears from their eyes.” They
 shall live in the midst of the most perfect, ho-
 nourable, and happy society. What an innu-

merable company of angels to assist and associate with them in every service, and in every enjoyment! What a countless multitude redeemed with them from among men of every age, and kindred, and tongue, and nation, and not an unholy or unhappy member among them—no difference of sentiment, no contending passions, no interfering interests, no untuned harp, and no discordant heart to give a moment's disturbance to their sweet celestial harmony. But the enjoyment connected with their benevolent useful character, will chiefly arise from those who have been the objects of their kind and liberal charity upon earth. They may be amongst the first to hail them into these everlasting habitations. And highly indeed must they think themselves honoured to receive the blessings and congratulations of those saints, whose faith was strengthened, whose patience was supported, whose drooping spirits were revived, and whose bodily diseases were healed or wants supplied, by their charitable offices. How exquisite will be their feelings, when others present themselves, who were first brought into the way of salvation, and kept in it by them, the instruments in the hand of God for accomplish-

ing this blessed effect? How will their crowns of joy and rejoicing now brighten on their heads? Every recognized effect of their beneficence, and each recorded instance of its progressive influence among their fellow-men, shall bring new accessions to their high enjoyment. Shall all this distinguished glory be received as only the success and enjoyment of vain ambition and carnal pride? No, my brethren, no such sentiment or gratification can have a moment's existence in the realms of light. Another, and far nobler spirit dwells in their blessed inhabitants. They are fitted to bear "an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory," without the possibility of any degree of self-conceit, or any vain, or foolish, or proud imagination ever rising in their minds. They enjoy themselves and one another in God and the Lamb, as the everlasting source and centre of every honour and joy. Though surrounded, therefore, with those who owe and acknowledge eternal obligations to their former kindness and care, these sincere and warm acknowledgments, so far from being intended or received as flattery, or converted into self-admiration, turn all their thoughts on Him, who hath done all things according to the counsel of his own will. They con-

template, with a growing enlargement of soul, and with unceasing rapture, the connected plans and operations of providence and grace, thus unfolded to their admiring view. They now see, with pleasing and increasing astonishment, how all the parts of their former histories, which here appeared detached and accidental, were regular links of one chain, formed by infinite wisdom, preserved unbroken amidst all the vicissitudes of life, by an Almighty Providence, and extending from eternity to eternity. There is not, therefore, any thing great, or good, or happy, in themselves, or in others by their means, which they now do not trace up to him who sitteth upon the throne. Delightfully and gratefully they view every disposition and exertion in themselves to do good, and all its various influence and effects upon others, as originating solely in divine love, rendered efficacious only by the divine agency, and now gloriously rewarded by the purest grace. They, therefore, break out in one adoring hymn of praise—"O the depths of the
 " riches both of the wisdom and goodness of
 " God! How unfathomable are his judgments,
 " and his ways past finding out!" "Not un-
 " to us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy

“ name be all the glory.” If such grace and truth and glory are contained in the promise in our text, is it not exceedingly great and precious, and have we not the most complete evidence and assurance, that “ he who soweth bountifully “ shall reap also bountifully ?”

Having offered what appeared necessary to the illustration of the plan proposed, let me now intreat your attention to the practical improvement of the subject.

IN the *first* place, then, it may direct us in forming a just judgment of our own characters. Various are the sources of self-deception. It does not belong to my present subject to point them out, but rather to observe that we are well guarded against all mistakes, by the uniform connexion marked in scripture betwixt our duty and our interest, our character and prospects ; and by the variety of description employed to distinguish the true Christian from the false assuming pretender.—Thus, in the text which we have attempted to illustrate, we find the most glorious hopes set before us, even a rich harvest of eternal honour and joy. But who shall enjoy it ? “ Let us not be deceived ;

“ God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” “ He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.”

We must, then, either abandon every hope beyond the grave, or inquire and decide concerning that character with which this hope is connected. Let us apply to the close examination of our prevailing views, dispositions, and conduct. Are we charitable ? Are we liberal in charity ? Amiable divine charity ! Who does not celebrate thy praise ? What virtue stands so high on the roll of fame ? Against it there is no law. Its reputation is established and universal. But does it really exist and act to an equal extent ? Do all who extol the name possess the thing itself.

There is, perhaps, scarcely any virtue or grace more generally misrepresented and misunderstood. Thus, if easily moved by tragic representations, or pathetic descriptions, we mistake the occasional emotion, and the starting tear for the habitual sensibilities of a tender heart. By a certain constitutional sweetness of temper, superadded to habits of courtesy, we may say to the poor and miserable, “ Be ye warmed and filled.” But

is this charity? Does it always follow, that they who weep most readily at the tale of woe, feel most deeply the sorrows of the afflicted, or, with greatest active exertion, go forth to their relief? When men are attached, and kind to their friends, they suppose themselves possessed of universal benevolence; but to them may I not address the words of our Lord? “If ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans the same.” Not a few boast of their charity at the expence of almost every other virtue; because they are ready to contribute a trifle upon every call of clamant distress: They regard this as full proof of the goodness of their hearts, and consequently of their whole character; and yet all the while it may be no more than a peace-offering to a guilty conscience, or to an offended God. All the while they may be sacrificing at the altar of proud ambition, expensive luxury, or sensual gratification; living to the prejudice, if not the ruin of the industrious tradesman, by a long and precarious credit; yea, and what is still worse, living in open contempt of that very God, whose favour they pretend to merit by their deeds of charity.

No virtue was ever enjoined, or can have the least effect to change the nature, or lessen the demerit of vice. The day approaches, when the Judge of all the earth shall say, to the conviction and confusion of such pretenders to charity, "who hath required this at your hands? Depart from me, I know you not." Would we judge fairly and honestly concerning the character represented in our text, let us not attend to it, as the description of a single virtue, or of a few detached sentiments and acts of kindness. Every real virtue is always related to a bright assemblage of moral excellencies, of which God himself is at once the author and the standard. Such we have seen is the character of the bountiful man, nor can we lay claim to it, unless upon, impartial inquiry, we find, that another spirit than our own, or that of the world, directs and animates our whole conduct; yea, that the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit hath raised us above self, and sense, and sin, to the knowledge and resemblance of God as revealed in the gospel. Have we then felt, that divine power, renewing us in the spirit of our minds, causing us to know experimentally divine redeeming love, and to

live habitually under its influence? Does our charity take its rise, and derive all its vigour and strength from thence? Hath divine love acted with such energy and effect upon our minds, as to expand them with love and good will, and generous sentiments to our fellow-creatures? Do we express these principles by the uniform and liberal exercise of charity to all within the reach of our ability? Do we give with a willing cheerful mind? Do we extend our beneficence to the souls, as well as the bodies of men? Are we denied to our own honour and ease, and profit, zealous to advance the glory of God, and the eternal salvation of needy perishing sinners? If we can reply to these questions in the affirmative, happy are we. Christian charity marks our character. We are inspired with that noblest benevolence, which has for its object the good of others, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.

MUST not the consideration of this approved character lead us, in the *second* place, to study and admire that religion from which it receives all its excellence? It is impossible to read the inspired volume without seeing this character drawn

in the liveliest and most expressive colours.

—Various and strong and attractive are the features in which it is there exhibited. There God himself is represented as commanding, encouraging, and rewarding it. There God, manifest in the flesh, is exhibited, exemplifying it before our eyes in full life. And *there*, too, we are assured that it is the delightful office and work of his Holy Spirit to form the same lovely image on the soul of man. Must not that be a divine religion, and worthy of all acceptation, in which we find such a combination of influences thus exerted to purify and enoble the human mind? Must not that religion be of God which, in its whole constitution and spirit, is manifestly designed to dignify human nature with every divine and social virtue which cannot be cordially embraced, and honestly professed, without producing these happy effects? It declares that God is love. Its supreme law to man is love. All its principles conspire to the moral elevation of the grovelling spirit, to the expansion of the narrow contracted soul. Of every great and generous sentiment, Jesus was himself the perfect pattern; and he acknowledges no disciples, but the studious imitators of his example. Would we, then,

learn the true theory and practice of charity ; let us come to Jesus of Nazareth, “ and learn of “ him who was meek and lowly in heart, and “ who continually went about doing good.”

Let infidelity blush for itself, in opposing a religion, which invariably teaches, and effectually inspires universal benevolence. Let men condemn charity, or approve Christianity. All the true friends of Jesus are the best friends of mankind. Believing and doing as he teaches, we cannot fail to be happy ourselves, and the honoured instruments of happiness to all around us.

Need I go farther for an illustration of this doctrine than to the very respectable Society, at whose request I have the honour now to address you. “ While many are spending their money “ for that which is not bread, and their labour “ for that which satisfieth not ;” while many are hiding their talents in the earth through covetousness or sloth, or squandering them in excess of riot or dissipation, this society exhibits to the world, as it hath long done, men zealous and active in the service of God and their country. The reverend and honourable members who at present compose it, like those

who went before them, continue to hold up to our view an object worthy of our most serious attention, and generous support. They grudge not the laborious part of this benevolent service. With unremitting ardour and assiduity, they employ their time and attention and influence in carrying into effect the important and extensively beneficial designs of their institution. They rejoice that the extent of their funds enables them to do so much good; and it is their constant care and highest ambition to apply them to the most useful purposes. Thousands have experienced the benefit of their united wisdom, zeal, and exertions. In the name of these thousands, they are ever ready to pay the due tribute of respect and gratitude to a generous public, and to benevolent individuals, who have contributed to their support and assistance. With these pleasing sentiments however, there is necessarily mingled the painful thought that they cannot extend their influence farther. Many need and cry to them for help to whom they cannot send it, not for want of inclination or exertion, but of ability. They rely on the generosity of those who wish well to the interests of religion and virtue, who are able

and willing to assist them to be more extensively useful.

While I cannot but make this honourable mention of the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge, I know that, independent of my praise, they seek not glory of men—Suffer me then, to turn to you, my much respected friends, *in the direction of it*, and to say, let it be your increasing ambition “to shine as lights in the
“world, that others seeing your good works,
“may glorify your Father in heaven.” I hope you will ever bear in mind that the work in which you are engaged does not so much derive honour from you as you from it. Let the character which has been imperfectly given of the truly benevolent man, be better illustrated by your exemplary conduct. Let not difficulties, nor neglect, nor opposition, discourage your zeal in the service of God, and the Redeemer, and the souls of men. Yielding to the full influence of divine love, “let it be your meat and drink to do the
“will of your heavenly Father. Be not weary
“in well-doing; for in due season ye shall reap,
“if ye faint not.”

And do you, *my hearers, who are not of the Society*, go and do likewise; strengthen their

hands, and encourage their hearts, by your cheerful and liberal assistance. Many schemes, formed upon benevolent principles, are limited in their designs and operations. They may be confined to a party, to one kind of distress, or to some narrow description of men. So far as the utility of the scheme, and our connexion with it, are apparent, we ought to give it our cordial support; but such schemes seldom afford scope to the full exercise of benevolent affections. This charitable institution embraces greater designs: A well-principled mind here meets with its favourite objects. Need I reason with persons of this character? Indulge yourselves, my friends, and you cannot but contribute to the vast objects of this generous body of men. The cheerful offering to this treasury indicates the collected influence of most diffusive goodness. If you wish to see a rude people civilized; a servile race raised to a just sense of liberty; minds enslaved and corrupted by fascinating arts, emancipated from this spiritual bondage; men, though living under the same government, divided from us by a difference of language, and local situation and prejudices,

restored to union in language, sentiment, and loyal attachment ; their indolence roused to action and turned to habits of industry, and, of course, their wild uncultivated country, improved, enriched, and beautified ; their mutual animosities converted into unanimous zeal in the defence of these united kingdoms against their common enemies ; a multitude sunk in ignorance, irreligion, and vice, led into the bright path of illuminating, sanctifying, and saving truth ; the scriptures, and various means of spiritual instruction, as well as of useful labour, and of personal and relative happiness, plentifully provided to men enveloped in the thickest darkness of ignorance and error, poverty and wretchedness ;—If these are objects of magnitude and importance in your eye, these are the objects to which the benevolent zeal of this Society is uniformly and vigorously directed.—The history of their management and success, repeatedly given to the public, fully shows what they have done, and what they hope and wish to do. The noblest channels then, in which you can desire charity to flow, here open to your view : Follow their spreading course with your generous contributions

and your fervent prayers. The gospel of our Lord was intended to be an universal blessing to the human race ; and the liberal charity which it commands and inspires, is one great mean of its propagation. It is not to be supposed that the great numbers who received its beneficial influence, will always remain in one place : Many who were indebted to this Society for their education, are now in the most distant lands, and many hereafter “ will go to and fro, “ and knowledge shall be increased. They shall “ speak of the glory of the Mediator’s kingdom, “ and talk of his power ; to make known to the “ sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious “ majesty of his kingdom. Thus one genera- “ tion shall praise his works to another, and “ shall declare his mighty acts—till the Lord “ has brought his sons from far, and his daugh- “ ters from the ends of the earth.” What mind, warmed with the love of our Lord, and of his interests in the world, does not burn with zeal to join in such an honourable employment ? “ Whatever then your hands find to do in this “ great work, do it with all your might.” The time is short. “ The end of all things is at

“ hand. Behold, faith Christ, I come quickly,
“ and my reward is with me. Then they that
“ be wise shall shine as the brightness of the fir-
“ mament, and they that turn many to righte-
“ ousness, as the stars, for ever and ever.”

ERRATA.

Page 56 line 11 Vanvryhousen, read Vanvryhouven.

57 3 Legacies, read legacy.

Id. 10 Bredalbane, read Braidalbane.

68 4 Dele furnishing.

APPENDIX.

ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF

THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND
FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

From June 1787 to December 1789.

SOCIETY-HALL, December 16. 1789.

THE uncommon lateness of the publication of this year's Anniversary Sermon, a circumstance which, however much they might regret, the Directors could not prevent, enables them to carry on the abstract of their proceedings to a later period than usual.

In a note annexed to the Sermon of last year, a promise was made that an account of the schools and state of the Society would be given to the public in a separate paper.

DR. MCFARLAN, then Secretary of the Society, to whose department business of that kind properly belongs, at that time fully intended to have published a new edition "of the Summary Account of the Rise and Progress of the Society," which he wrote and published in the year 1783. A long and tedious illness, which terminated in his death, in December last, (1788) prevented the accomplishment of this intention. The design, though necessarily postponed, is by

no means laid aside. By the death of that worthy man, the society were deprived of talents and exertions singularly great and active, which had long been devoted to their service.

For some years previous to his being elected Secretary, he had given particular attention to the business of the Society; and from the spirit and abilities he then discovered, the members were led to consider it as a particular felicity that he was prevailed upon to accept of that office; an office laborious in no common degree, and of which the only reward is the consciousness of doing good.

The hopes entertained of Dr. McFarlan were amply vindicated: His mind, comprehensive and acute, was peculiarly formed for business, and his penetration was fully seconded by the perseverance of his application and promptness of his execution. Amidst the great diversity of objects to which the duties of his office constantly solicited his attention, nothing was omitted or perfunctorily performed; while to things of real magnitude, he bent the force of his mind, he neglected not the most minute. To his unwearied application to the affairs of the Society, their present good order and arrangement are much to be ascribed. The extensive correspondence which he carried on, and the multitude of letters which he wrote with his own hand upon the business of the Society, would have appeared, to most men of his station, employment more than sufficient. But this was but one branch of his office: The whole transactions of the Society, under the authority and sanction of the Di-

rectors, were carried on under his immediate superintendence. He was eminently the patron of the great work of translating the Old Testament Scriptures into the Gaelic language. From him the benevolent plan of adopting into the service of the Society the schoolmasters employed by the Trustees upon the Forfeited Estates, derived its origin. But to particularize all his good services done to the public through the channel of this institution, would far exceed the limits of an appendix. Suffice it to say in general, that to uncommon talents for business, he united an ardour of benevolence which supported him amidst all his labours, and animated him to exertions which no selfish considerations would have produced, and no pecuniary remuneration required. His services were the gratuitous efforts of a generous mind, ever anxious to promote the best interests of religion and his country ;—while he neglected no duty that he owed to his family and private circle of connexions, few men of his sphere were ever more eminently devoted to the public.—He lived respected as a man and a minister, beloved as a friend and companion, confided in as a faithful servant to an extensively charitable institution. The Directors, mourning the loss which the Society sustained by his death, hope for the indulgence and sympathy of the public, while they pay this just tribute of grateful acknowledgment to his memory.

THEY now return to the narrative of their transactions during the interval which has elapsed since the

publication of the last appendix in June 1787. Their affairs were then stated to be in a flourishing condition; and they have now the happiness to acquaint the public, that their prosperity not only has suffered no interruption, but considerably increased. Many instances of generosity they have since that time experienced. Besides the collections at the two anniversary meetings of their corresponding board in London; the first in 1788, the second in spring last, amounting together to near L. 600: They have received from Lord Vanvryhousen, formerly an eminent benefactor to the Society, a donation of L. 500 4 per cent. bank annuities; the interest of which is appropriated to the purposes of their institution.

The late Earl of Hyndford, a distinguished benefactor, and useful member of the Society, bequeathed to it a legacy of L. 100; the late Miss Gibson of Durie a legacy of L. 50; the late Mrs Douglas of Burnhouses a legacy of L. 50; the late Mr Thomson minister of St Ninians a legacy of L. 100; all of which have been received, along with a number of smaller donations, which it will be their endeavour faithfully to apply according to the will of their benefactors.

In addition to these various donations, the Society have the pleasure to inform the public, that within these few days they have received the sum of L. 500, from a benevolent lady of this place, (who desires that her name may be concealed,) upon condition of their constantly maintaining a charity-school in Edinburgh, for the education of poor children. They gratefully acknowledge this very liberal benefaction, and with

pleasure acquiesce in a condition which so entirely coincides with the design of their institution.

The very munificent legacies of the late Lady Glenorchy of L. 5000, has been repeatedly mentioned to the public. Of this sum the treasurer has now received payment; and the Directors have, for some time past, turned their attention to the proper application of it, conformably to the will of their liberal benefactress, viz. for the improvement, in the first instance, of the estates of Bredalbane and Sutherland. With this view, they have been at considerable pains in procuring the necessary information of the state of those parts of the country, and the circumstances that ought to direct this expenditure; and also in maintaining correspondence upon this subject with the noble proprietors, and their men of business. They have now begun to digest a plan for its permanent application, to the best evident advantage of the people on these estates, in which they have good reason to hope for the concurrence and co-operation of the proprietors. This plan they expect soon to be able to bring to maturity, and will then, without delay, proceed to its execution.

In December 1788, intimation was given to the Directors, that the late Lady Dowager Grant of Monymusk had, by a clause in her will, bequeathed "to the Society for propagating the Christian Knowledge in foreign parts, the sum of L. 500." Though the words of this clause do not exactly correspond to the designation of this Society, yet, from strong collateral testimony, of which the Society is in possession,

they have every reason to conclude, that Lady Grant's intention was in their favour. The Directors have accordingly stated their claim to that sum; and from the disposition of Lady Grant's executors, as well as the validity of the claim itself, they have good reason to hope for a favourable issue.

In the appendix to the sermon in 1786, a particular account was given of the transaction in which the Society had been engaged, with regard to the school-masters formerly employed by the Trustees upon the Annexed Estates. From that statement it appeared, that the Society would, upon every supposition, sustain an expence considerably greater than the interest of the sum they were to receive from Government. That expence has already amounted to about L. 500. The sum allowed by the public, viz. L. 2500, was, by order of the Barons of Exchequer, paid into the hands of a banker, on the account of the Society, in the month of June last: But that money they are prevented from receiving into their own hands, and lending out at the usual rate of interest, by some difficulties which have arisen with respect to the nature of the obligation required for implementing the conditions of the act, authorising the payment of that sum. The Society, conscious of the purity of their intentions, flatter themselves that these difficulties, which, on their part, are founded merely in zeal for the greater good of the public, will be overcome, and they relieved from stipulations, which, in their opinion, would materially tend to the prejudice of the objects, on ac-

count of which they originally entered into this transaction.

Anxious to fulfill the conditions of their agreement with the public, they are determined, as soon as they shall be put in full possession of the sum appropriated for their use, to allow the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses upon the restored estates, whom they have taken into their service, and who are now restricted to an interim allowance, the whole of the salaries which they formerly enjoyed.

The translation of the Bible into the Gaelic language has, for some years past, been carrying on and publishing under the care of the Society, in consequence of the liberal collection made for that purpose throughout Scotland. It was formerly intimated, that the whole of the New Testament, and three parts of the Old, had been printed, and were ready for distribution. The only remaining part, which concludes the undertaking *, they are sorry to find, from the avocations of the gentleman who conducts it, as well as from the difficult nature of the work itself, is not yet in complete readiness for the press. This the Directors regret the more, that until that part be finished, they are prevented from giving the Gaelic Bible that extent of circulation which the importance of that object to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland leads them anxiously to wish for. It was originally proposed to have sent to every Highland parish a certain number of copies proportioned to its extent,

* Containing the books of the Old Testament from the book of Chronicles to the prophet Isaiah.

to be distributed, *gratis*, among those who were least able to purchase them. But, in consequence of the information and advice of a variety of respectable persons, well acquainted with the state of the Highlands, the Directors are induced to lay aside this intention. It is evident, that a sufficient number of copies could not be sent to supply every demand: In many cases, improper demands would be made; and any real or fancied preference in the distribution, would only excite discontent and murmuring, where charity and accommodation were intended. For these reasons, the Directors are advised to *sell*, instead of gratuitously bestowing, the Gaelic Bible, but at a price low enough for even the poor to afford. This plan it was once the intention of the Directors to have proceeded in immediately, with those parts of the Bible which are already finished. But, after mature deliberation and advice, it now appears to them more eligible to postpone it till the whole work shall be completed, as an extensive circulation of imperfect copies would involve the business in confusion, and, in a considerable measure, defeat the object proposed, viz. to furnish the *whole* Scriptures entire, to those who have never as yet enjoyed the word of God in a language they could understand. The period of accomplishing this, they trust, is at no great distance. They have urged the gentleman engaged in the translation to hasten it forward with all possible expedition; and they confide in his disposition to comply, as far as his well-known accuracy and fidelity will permit.

As soon as the work shall be completed, the public

shall be advertised of the reduced price at which they propose to sell it for the accommodation of the poor, and the plan to which they shall be advised, as most likely to give the scriptures an extensive circulation through Highland parishes. In the mean time, they continue to distribute as formerly copies of the volumes already printed for the use of their schools.

Anxious to fulfill the whole duties of their office, the Directors have not been inattentive to that branch of it which relates to foreign infidel countries, although this, from the nature of things, must be, and always has been, considered by them as a secondary object of regard. At present two missionary ministers are employed in their service among the Indian tribes of America.—*Mr. Kirkland*, whom they have repeatedly had occasion to mention with high approbation, continues his labours among the *Oneidas*, in midst of the greatest hardships and fatigues, with a zeal and perseverance truly apostolical. From his journals, which he has from time to time transmitted, it appears, that his ministry has been blessed with success; that, by means of it, many individuals, and several of these benighted tribes have been led to embrace, and continue steadfast in the profession of the gospel. He has also begun, and made considerable progress, in a translation of the scriptures into one of the most generally known Indian tongues; a work evidently of great importance and utility to the propagation of the gospel among that savage people.—The other missionary minister is a *Mr. Sargeant*, employed by the Directors in 1787, upon the recommendation of their corre-

sponding board in Boston, among the Stockbridge Indians. This Reverend Gentleman has also transmitted journals of his mission, from which there is reason to hope that it will prove useful.

An attempt to send the gospel to the natives of Africa, in their own country, by means of some negroes of Rhode Island, converted to Christianity, was some time ago proposed to the Society by the College of Yale in Connecticut; and for the encouragement of this generous intention, a donation of L. 50 from a lady was deposited with the Society. The scheme has not as yet appeared to them so thoroughly digested as to warrant their taking an active part in it; but they have signified to the gentlemen with whom it originated, their disposition to concur in any rational and probable plan that may be formed for carrying on so good a design.

The Directors have only to mention further, with respect to their foreign affairs, that, after a very long correspondence with Mr. Wheelock, son of the late Dr. Wheelock, upon the subject of the school for the education of Indian youth, and of missionaries for the Indians, (for which a liberal collection was made through Scotland in the year 1767, and the money deposited with, and put under the management of the Society,) a final settlement has been made, and a full discharge of all demands obtained, till June last. The public may rest assured, that every degree of attention has been, and shall continue to be employed, that this fund, committed in trust to the Society, shall be

faithfully devoted to the purposes for which it was raised.

It still remains that they should state to the public an object which appears to them of great importance, and which of late has engaged much of their attention.

Supported by the generosity of the public, and of benevolent individuals, in their plans for the benefit of their country, it concerned them deeply to be themselves ascertained, and that by their means the public should know, that the sums expended by them with that intention are not misemployed in the remote parts of the Highlands and Islands to which they are sent; that the teachers in their service are diligent and faithful, and that the accommodations stipulated for them by the standing rules of the Society are afforded. It is true, that certificates as to these points are annually transmitted to the Society by the several presbyteries in whose bounds their schools are stationed; but it occurred to them, that a visitation of their schools by one of their own body, in whose report they could perfectly confide, would be productive of many important advantages; that, in general, it would mark an attention upon their part to the great objects of their institution, which, they were persuaded, would be acceptable to the public at large, and particularly so to people of all descriptions in those parts of the country where their schools are stationed, and procure them notice and regard from many proprietors and others, naturally connected with them, some of whom have hitherto viewed them with a

too careless eye. With respect to the teachers themselves, they had every reason to expect the best effects from such a visitation; that it would give a new stimulus and encouragement to the exertions of the worthy and deserving, and a much needed check to the inattention and misconduct of such as might be found of an opposite character,

In fine, they were persuaded that, by such a measure alone, the real state of things, in many instances, and particularly in remote parts of the country, would be discovered, and such knowledge of characters, facts, and local circumstances obtained, as would enable either the Board of Directors, or the Officers of the Society, to conduct its business with satisfaction to themselves, and utility to the public.

Moved by these and the like considerations, the Society, so far back as the year 1760, granted a commission to the late Dr. Webster of Edinburgh, and other respectable members of the Board of Directors, to visit their schools, and report their state. That part of this duty which Dr. Webster undertook, extending, however, only to one part of the country, he faithfully performed, as appears by his report among the Society's papers.

In 1770, the Society found a general visitation of their schools to be greatly wanted; it was then deemed too arduous a task for one of their own members to undertake; they therefore granted a commission for this purpose to Lieutenant Lewis Drummond, a person in whom they had confidence; and, in the course of two years, chiefly devoted to that business, he visited

all their schools, and afforded to the Society much necessary and important information, as was stated to the public in the account of the Society, written and published in 1774, by the late Alexander Belsches, Esq; Advocate, then their Secretary, and whose uncommon labours and merits in their service will long be held in grateful remembrance.

A period of seventeen years having elapsed since that visitation, and the state of things, as may be supposed, being now greatly altered, another was judged highly necessary, and earnestly wished for. The present Secretary was prevailed upon, in the month of June last, to accept of a commission from the general meeting of the Society for that purpose; and, in the execution of it, employed above three months, in which time he proceeded as far as could be expected in the course of one season.—Travelling by Perth and and Crieff to Killin, he went to the coast of Lorn in Argyleshire; from thence to the Isle of Mull, and a variety of the islands in its neighbourhood, in which the Society have established Schools.—Returning to the mainland, he travelled by Appin and Fort William, through Lochaber, to Fort Augustus; from thence by the north side of Lochness into Ross and Cromarty-shires; then through the counties of Sutherland and Caithness, and returned by Inverness, Fort George, Strathspey, and Badenoch. His objects as he went along were to visit and examine the schools, to observe the number and proficiency of the scholars, to inquire into the character and conduct of the teachers, the nature of the accommodations afforded, and the encouragement

given to them by the proprietors and inhabitants ;— to mark the state of the various countries through which he passed, the propriety of the stations where schools are now erected, and to point out other places where they may be equally necessary, with whatever else might occur to him to be of importance for the Society to be informed of.

These things were accordingly stated by the Secretary, in a full and circumstantial report, of great length, which contained much information, and gave general satisfaction.

The following extract, from the conclusion of his report, it is imagined, will not be unacceptable to the public.

“ IN compliance with the appointment of his brethren of the Society, the Secretary has endeavoured
 “ to fulfill the objects of their commission to him, as
 “ far as they could be attained during the course of
 “ one season. The length of the journey, and the
 “ variety of objects which occurred during the course
 “ of it to solicit attention, required, no doubt, considerable exertions both of body and mind : But his
 “ fatigue was balanced and rewarded by the hospitality and kind attentions of the gentlemen and clergy of the various parts of the country through
 “ which he past ; and still more by the conviction
 “ that his labours would probably be attended with
 “ material advantage to that benevolent institution
 “ with which he is connected, and consequently to

“ the most important interests of multitudes of his
 “ countrymen.

“ In general, the Secretary has the pleasure to as-
 “ sure his brethren of the Society, that their efforts
 “ for promoting religion and civilization in these re-
 “ mote parts of our country, have produced effects
 “ happy, even beyond their most sanguine ideas.—
 “ Multitudes, by means of their schools, have receiv-
 “ ed education, who but for them had, in all human
 “ probability, been doomed to the most deplorable
 “ ignorance ; and among these many could be named
 “ who have made, and are still making, a distinguish-
 “ ed and respectable figure in life. But, besides
 “ this, a general and growing zeal for knowledge
 “ and improvement has been diffused among the low-
 “ er classes of the inhabitants of the Highlands and
 “ Islands, in so much, that in almost all those dis-
 “ tricts where the Society’s schools have been esta-
 “ blished, though now withdrawn to other stations,
 “ or in those in which they are still maintained,
 “ though too extensive for the schools to serve all the
 “ inhabitants, they exert themselves with wonderful
 “ industry to procure education for their children.
 “ For this purpose, when too poor to be able to
 “ build houses, and endue fixed schoolmasters, they
 “ agree as they can with young men, who go round
 “ among their villages, teach for a certain number of
 “ months or weeks in each, and are boarded and
 “ lodged by the parents of the children in rotation :
 “ Of this many instances occurred to the Secretary
 “ during the course of his tour.

“ Besides exciting this conviction of the importance
 “ and zeal for the acquisition of knowledge, the So-
 “ ciety have furnished the means of gratifying it, by
 “ furnishing numbers of young men taught at their
 “ schools, and qualified to become teachers of others.
 “ The Secretary, therefore, had the pleasure of con-
 “ templating a vast fabric of improvement and most
 “ important usefulness erected, and still advancing
 “ with great rapidity, upon the foundation which this
 “ Society has established and continues to support.

“ The objects previously expected from this visita-
 “ tion, the Secretary has the pleasure to find, that
 “ the Directors are satisfied, from his report, have
 “ been accomplished, so far as it extended. With
 “ the continuing approbation and countenance of the
 “ Society, he proposes to persevere in his labours, in
 “ order to fulfill the commission they have granted
 “ him, by visiting their schools in other parts of the
 “ country, as far as it shall be possible for him to ac-
 “ complish that design: In particular, to direct his
 “ next visitation to those schools on the south of the
 “ Murray Frith, which the lateness of the season,
 “ and the begun harvest, (when all schools in the
 “ country receive a vacation,) obliged him to relin-
 “ quish for the present year. These schools are situ-
 “ ated in the Highlands of Perthshire, and that part
 “ of Invernessshire which lies to the south of Loch-
 “ ness and the Murray Frith, and in the counties of
 “ of Nairn, Banff, Aberdeen, and Forfar; an exten-
 “ sive tour, and comprehending a great number of
 “ the Society's schools.

“ If it shall please God to permit him to complete
 “ his design of a general visitation, the Secretary
 “ will be enabled to submit to the Society some gene-
 “ ral propositions, founded in a comprehensive know-
 “ ledge of local circumstances, for the improvement
 “ of their plan for the regulation of their schools.”—
 Meantime, a variety of remarks, with this view, suggested by what he has already seen, were stated to the Committee of Directors, and by them to a general meeting of the Society. They were thought of consequence, and approved; and the Secretary was unanimously requested to continue his labours till the object shall be accomplished. The result of the whole shall, in due time, be communicated to the public.

By a generous public, this charitable institution has been reared from small beginnings to its present magnitude; by liberal contributions it continues to be supported, and its capacities of usefulness increased.

To the public, they who are intrusted with the management of its funds, hold themselves to be amenable; they will never decline an appeal to this tribunal, nor while supported by conscious fidelity and uprightness, will they doubt of a favourable issue.

They cannot conclude the present address, without expressing their grateful sense of their obligations to their benefactors in general, for their liberal contributions and active exertions in behalf of the institution. Some of the most eminent of these, from peculiar delicacy of mind, have prohibited their names to be mentioned to the public. They may however, rest

assured, that their generosity has made too deep an impression upon the minds of the Directors to be soon forgot. It is recorded in a register, which will preserve it in everlasting remembrance.

Some of their special benefactors, they consider themselves called upon to mention with particular and distinguished gratitude.

They rejoiced in the opportunity which his presence at their anniversary meeting in June last afforded the Society, of giving their unanimous and well-merited thanks to the Right Hon. Lord Balgonie, for his uncommon activity in seizing opportunities upon all occasions of promoting their interest.

The Earl of Leven, their worthy President, who was also personally present, was pleased, at the request of the meeting, and in their name, to write letters of thanks to the Duke of Gordon for his having cheerfully accepted, and with spirit and propriety fulfilled the office of presiding at the last anniversary meeting of their corresponding board in London; and to the Earl of Kinnoull for his good services upon the same occasion, as well as his generously continuing the handsome annual donation of his worthy predecessor, the late much respected President of the Society.

The Earl of Leven was also pleased, in compliance with the like request, to express by letters, the thanks of the Society to the Earl of Dumfries, the Hon. Captain John Leslie, Sir David Carnegie Baronet, Charles Jardine Esq; Samuel Search Esq; and Dr. Herbert Mayo, for their having kindly undertaken the office of Stewards at the next anniversary meeting of

the Board in London; and the Society indulge the hope, that the attendance and countenance of the Noblemen and Gentlemen, formerly their friends and benefactors, will upon that occasion, exhibit evidence, that both their zeal for the interest of their institution, and their confidence in those to whom its management is committed, continue undiminished.

The Directors, in the conclusion of this address, beg leave to assure the public, that as at no period the affairs of the Society wore a more favourable aspect, so at none was there a greater anxiety than at present to conduct them with attention, prudence, and fidelity.

THE PRESIDENT, DIRECTORS, AND OFFICERS
OF THE
SOCIETY, FOR THE YEAR 1789.

DAVID EARL OF LEVEN AND MELVILL,
PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

Committee of Directors.

James Earl of Hopeton President.

Sir James Colquhoun of Lufs, Bart. one of the principal clerks of session.

Rev. William Gloag, D. D.

Rev. Thomas Randal,

Rev. Andrew Hunter, D. D.

} Ministers
of Edinburgh.

Rev. William Paul, minister of St. Cuthberts.

Isaac Grant, Esq;

Horatius Cannan, Esq;

Alexander Duncan, Esq;

William McDonald of St. Martins, Esq;

James Forrest of Comiston, Esq;

} Clerks to
the Signet.

Andrew Hamilton, depute comptroller of Excise,
Esq.

John Dickson, Esq; advocate.

Mr John Moncrieff, apothecary.

Mr John Pitcairn, merchant.

Officers of the Society.

Rev. John Kemp, one of the ministers of Edinburgh,
Secretary.

John Davidfon, Esq; clerk to the signet, Treasurer.

William Galloway, Esq; merchant in Edinburgh,
Comptroller.

Robert Chalmers, Esq; Accountant General of Ex-
cise, Accountant.

Mr. Archibald Lundie, clerk to the signet, Book-
holder.

Mr. James Bonar, clerk to the Solicitor of Excise,
Clerk.

M. Gray, Bookseller.

Mungo Watson, Beadle.

*Annual and other Benefactions are received by the
following Persons.*

IN EDINBURGH,

By John Davidfon, Esq; Writer to the Signet,
Treasurer to the Society.

IN LONDON,

By Thomas Coutts, Esq; Banker in the Strand.

John M'Intosh, Esq; No. 8. North side of the
Royal Exchange, Secretary to the Society.

William Fuller, Esq; and Son, Bankers, Lombard-Street.

Form of a Bequest or Legacy.

Item, I give and bequeath the sum of
to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian
Knowledge, to be applied (to the purposes of the first
or second patent, as the donor pleases.)—See both
patents, p. 54 and 59, of the account of the Society,
published in May 1774.

Those who may be pleased to favour this Society
with Bequests or Legacies, are intreated to express
their intention in the very words above directed; and
particularly to take care that the words, *in Scotland*,
be not omitted.

N. B. On account of the lateness of the publication of this year's Anniversary Sermon, it was judged unnecessary to publish the list of the Society's establishment of schools for the current year. In the month of February, the scheme of schools is annually made up; and at present a variety of alterations are in contemplation. It is hoped, that the next year's Anniversary Sermon will be published early; and it is intended that a correct list of the schools and teachers, including the proposed alterations, shall be added to the appendix of that sermon.—At present it may suffice to mention in general, that the number of schools upon the establishment of the Society, for the education of children, in reading, writing, and the principles of religion, amounts to 186, and the average number of the children taught in them to 9,500.—Of their schools for the education of female children, in various branches of useful industry, to 35; and of the children taught in them to 250.

THE END.



